

THE PATHWAYS PROJECT

TO ADDRESS THE HOMELESS CRISIS IN BERKELEY

A Joint Proposal by

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The Pathways Project: INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is a major challenge in the City of Berkeley, and throughout the Bay Area. Various reports estimate that there are between 800 and 1200 homeless individuals living in Berkeley at any given time. A humanitarian disaster for the homeless themselves, this crisis also impacts community enjoyment of streets, sidewalks, parks, commercial areas and neighborhoods, especially in locations with significant concentrations of homeless individuals.

Luckily, the best solution for the homeless is also a solution for the entire community: housing with appropriate supportive services. Berkeley is already engaged in innovative work to address the homeless crisis, and there are additional effective models Berkeley can look to. The US Department of Veterans Affairs undertook a project to end homelessness among veterans, with great success. As a result of the VA's work, The 2016 PIT count showed that homelessness among Veterans was down by almost 50% since 2010, nationwide. San Francisco has housed 22,000 homeless individuals over the past 11 years, a great achievement, despite the fact that large numbers of individuals remain unhoused. With a will, an enhanced plan, and added resources, Berkeley can make significant progress in addressing the homeless crisis.

Mayor Arreguin's office and office of Councilmember Hahn, as well as City Staff, have carefully researched many models which have been implemented in other communities, and how best to adapt those practices to Berkeley. The Federal government as well as many states and cities have adopted a Housing First approach over an emergency services model. In recent years, Berkeley has taken steps to implement a Housing First model, but faces unique challenges. Some communities have a lot of land which can be developed into affordable housing; Berkeley does not. Some communities have substantial housing already available; Berkeley has very little. On the other hand, Berkeley has an innovative centralized intake process, through a new service center called "the HUB," and we are incredibly lucky to have an extensive network of experienced homeless service providers and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) which we can partner with and leverage to help resolve this crisis.

Berkeley is also committed to human rights and to compassionate action. Based on our research, and taking into account Berkeley's unique circumstances, we are pleased to present this comprehensive plan to address the homeless crisis in Berkeley.

THE PATHWAYS PROJECT:

The Pathways Project establishes and implements both **interim** and **long term** measures to address the homeless crisis in Berkeley, for the benefit of homeless individuals and to mitigate impacts on Berkeley's streets, parks, commercial areas and neighborhoods.

Key goals of The Pathways Project are to:

- Provide homeless individuals with temporary respite and relief from living on the streets and, to the extent possible given resources, permanent housing, services and support
- Relieve pressure on areas of Berkeley experiencing disproportionate impacts of concentrated homeless populations, and throughout Berkeley

The Pathways Project : GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Pathways Project is guided by five Principles:

1. **Maximize regional collaboration, partnerships and equitable sharing of costs.** Berkeley will participate actively in Alameda County, regional and other cooperative efforts to address homelessness through sharing of expertise, facilities, costs and other resources.
2. **Create structures to organize, receive and amplify the goodwill and partnership** of private citizens, foundations, businesses and other generous individuals and organizations.
3. **Work in partnership with existing CBOs and Homeless Services Agencies.** Strengthen collaboration with and among Berkeley's many dedicated homeless and health services agencies, assist in building organizational capacities and help fill gaps in the service network.
4. **Adopt a funding model that maximizes outside sources of funding.** Identify and seek funding from all potential sources, existing and to be developed, including Federal, State, County and other public monies as well as private sources including foundations, grants, businesses, organizations and individuals.
5. **Use a "Berkeley First" model for allocating permanent housing.** To the extent possible, Pathways to permanent housing will be allocated on a priority basis to Berkeley Homeless, as identified by the HUB and other agencies.

The Pathways Project: INTERIM MEASURES

The Pathways Project calls for *immediate implementation* of Interim Measures to address the crisis of homelessness, while long-term housing, services and other solutions are more fully developed. Implementation of Interim Measures will require the identification of significant, emergency-type resources. Staff will be asked to present Council with an initial staffing and funding request, and suggested funding mechanisms, public and private, to achieve a rapid roll-out of Interim Measures.

Key Interim Measures are:

1. Create a **STAIR Center (Center for Stability, Navigation and Respite)**, based on San Francisco's Navigation Center model
2. Employ a variety of **Pathways to Housing**, based on San Francisco's Navigation Center "Exits," including a Homeward Bound program and transitional and permanent housing with supportive services, leveraging existing resources throughout Alameda County.
3. Create a **Bridge Living Community**, based on "tiny home" models and structured temporary communities that have proven successful in other cities.

4. Create protocols for and initiate **Robust Outreach and Enforcement**. Through intensive contact and outreach by experienced service providers, homeless persons will be invited to opt-into the STAIR Center. Outreach will be location-based, focused on areas of Berkeley with significant homeless populations, based on San Francisco's Encampment Resolution Team model and protocols. This period of intensive outreach, which has proven extremely effective in supporting moves into Navigation-type shelters in San Francisco, is followed by enforcement of camping and other applicable rules, coupled with continued and meaningful invitations to move to the STAIR Center.

STAIR CENTER

The **STAIR Center** will provide stability, safety, shelter and respite to homeless individuals while service providers identify needs, and develop potential pathways to housing and services. The STAIR Center will follow San Francisco's "encampment triage" model, to help move large concentrations of individuals from street locations towards housing and services, providing humane transitions for the homeless and relieving pressure on areas of Berkeley with significant concentrations or encampments.

Based on San Francisco's successful Navigation Centers, the STAIR Center will provide a "low barrier" shelter with storage and facilities for pets. San Francisco's centers have just two key rules – no on-site drug or alcohol consumption and no abuse or violence. With this model, they are highly successful in attracting and working with homeless individuals.

Stays at the STAIR Center are expected to be from *1-2 months*. While permanent housing with appropriate services is the most desired outcome from a stay at the STAIR Center, Berkeley has limited transitional or permanent housing to offer at this time. This program acknowledges that the benefits of a period of respite and connection to services are valuable even when permanent housing, or family reunification, are not possible. The **Bridge Living Community**, which will provide "extended stay respite" for those who qualify and opt-in, will initially offer the possibility of an additional *1-4 months* stay, and a longer time to identify services, permanent housing, employment and other options.

PATHWAYS from the STAIR CENTER:

Where will people go after a stay in the STAIR Center? We are committed to developing as many Pathways as possible, including:

- **Permanent Housing and Services** – existing and to be developed over time.
- **A Homeward Bound – Type program** - to reunite homeless individuals with family and communities able to receive, house and care for them appropriately.
- **A Bridge Living Community** – to be established by the City of Berkeley at a temporary location, offering extended stays to individuals for whom permanent housing or family reunification were not possible, and/or who qualify to join and choose to opt-in
- **Enhanced service models and housing options**. Individuals returning to the streets after a stay in the STAIR Center or Bridge Living Community should continue to receive case management, health care access, job training and counseling through existing services. To achieve this and other goals, Berkeley will work to create greater efficiencies and collaborations in our existing funded services. Continued efforts to identify better outcomes should be developed, as well as other creative options.

BRIDGE LIVING COMMUNITY

The Bridge Living Community will be similar to the STAIR Center, providing extended stay in temporary circumstances, but will offer a more village-like living facility, with some communal responsibilities, and opportunities to engage in activities such as gardening, taking classes, obtaining job training and placement, and connecting with mentors.

- The Bridge Living Community will forge strong partnerships with local volunteers, schools and organizations to provide opportunities for friendships, connections, education, arts, gardening/urban farming, jobs, job training, and more. The intent is for the Bridge Living Community to connect homeless individuals to the larger community, and the larger community to their homeless neighbors.
- Entrance to the Bridge Living Community will generally be via the STAIR Center, and by invitation only. A simple contract will be signed upon entry. The Community will be “low barrier,” but with more structure – and where appropriate, more responsibilities - than the STAIR Center.
- The Community will be reserved for individuals for whom a Homeward Bound or other long term housing & services option was not identified during their time at the STAIR center, with some exceptions.
- The Community will be managed by a homeless services agency that will provide ongoing services aimed at developing positive long term options and outcomes for residents. Resident participation in governance will be incorporated into the model, possibly including community-based dispute resolution, input into Community norms and rules, etc.
- Length of stay is intended to be up to 4 months, but under some circumstances can be extended by mutual agreement between the agency and individual.
- Living facilities will be temporary, in tent cabins or similar structures, and will include sanitary facilities, a communal cooking area, outdoor and meeting spaces, and other amenities.
- Services will be coordinated on-site
- Standards of conduct will be created based on Navigation Center, Tiny Homes Village and similar standards that exist in other communities, and can be subject to amendment based on community input
- Storage and facilities for pets will be provided.
- Residents will be encouraged to find work, connect with mentors and/or attend classes, if possible and appropriate

OUTREACH & ENFORCEMENT

Entry into the Pathway – starting with the STAIR Center and hopefully ending in a reunification or permanent housing solution, requires a robust, sustained intake model. An area with a significant concentration of homeless individuals will be identified, and a team of outreach workers will “move in” for 4-6 weeks to engage in sustained, intensive outreach efforts, based on San Francisco’s Encampment Resolution Team protocols. Outreach workers will work on-location to invite unhoused individuals to elect to move to the STAIR Center, and facilitate moves. Using this kind of outreach model, San Francisco has been highly successful in getting homeless individuals to opt into their Navigation Centers. These and similar protocols will be adapted to Berkeley.

On-location services and activities during outreach are likely to include:

- Sanitary facilities
- Garbage collection/Recycling
- Sustained, creative outreach with emphasis on relationship and trust building
- Provision of full and accurate information about opportunities, expectations and limitations of STAIR Center stays and Pathways options
- Help managing possessions
- Other support to prepare for and move to the STAIR center

This period of intake and support is to be **followed by enforcement** of camping and other laws, coupled with continued invitations and opportunities to enter the STAIR Center

- Enforcement protocols are being developed and vetted through the Council's Homeless Subcommittee
- Enforcement will be carried out by teams that include mental health and/or other outreach staff and will include repeated offers and opportunities to move to the STAIR Center with assistance from staff to remove, account for and/or safeguard property, as necessary according to legal and humane protocols
- Locations that have been subject to intensive outreach will continue to be subject to enforcement actions, on a discretionary basis, to deter renewed concentration of homeless individuals. All enforcement actions throughout the city, whether connected to an intensive outreach/encampment resolution effort or not, will be accompanied by meaningful, sustained invitations, opportunities and support for moving to the STAIR Center.

The Pathways Project: LONG TERM MEASURES

The centerpiece of the Pathway's Project's long term measures to address homelessness consists of direction to Berkeley's City Manager to work with Health and Human Services, Public Works, Police and other staff, as well as homeless services agencies and the Homeless Commission, UC Berkeley, and other partners, consultants and community members to create a **1000 Person Plan** to end homelessness for Berkeley's approximately 1000 unhoused individuals.

The 1000 Person Plan will address two key issues:

1. **Stemming the tide of new homeless being created** – San Francisco has housed 22,000 people over 10+ years, but still has approximately 10,000 homeless on its streets, *71% of whom were formerly housed in San Francisco*. Assuming East Bay statistics are similar, most of our homeless citizens are being pushed out of housing in our community. The 1000 Person Plan will include measures to augment services for the housing insecure and for newly homeless individuals, to assure rapid rehousing, as well as other programs and measures to reduce the number of individuals being made homeless.

2. **Providing Long Term Housing, Services and Life-Building Opportunities** for Berkeley's Homeless, both the "visible" homeless, living on our streets, and the less visible homeless, including families living in shelters or staying with relatives and friends, students couch surfing and living in cars, and other less visible homeless individuals. The Plan will address long term housing opportunities and identify service needs and gaps, including but not limited to healthcare, mental health and substance abuse, and pathways to work.

Direction to the City Manager and Staff will be broad, providing a singular mandate: develop a comprehensive, innovative and meaningful **1000 Person Plan**, building on existing structures and services and incorporating best practices, and determine resources and funding that will be needed to realize the plan.

The 1000 Person Plan is intended to be presented to the City Council by the end of 2017, so Council can discuss options and funding needs, and move towards phased or full implementation as quickly as possible in 2018. It is anticipated that funding the 1000 Person Plan will require new assessments and/or monies for Berkeley's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, bonds for capital projects, grants and donations, and other new sources of funding, some of which may require voter approval in the 2018 election cycle.

The Pathways Project: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A central element of the Pathways Project is to engage the goodwill and generosity of the community in solving the homeless crisis. Individuals with a willingness to donate for capital needs have already stepped forward, and others can be identified through a community-wide fundraising process. In the spirit of coming together to help our neighbors, the Pathways Project will create numerous opportunities for community participation.

Some of these may include:

- Partner and/or Contract with Private and/or Community Organizations to
 - Serve as Fiscal Agent for private donations (if necessary)
 - Provide goods and/or services on one-time or ongoing basis
- Raise private funds, from foundations, businesses, corporations and wealthy individuals (throughout the Bay Area, and beyond) to support the STAIR Center and BRIDGE Living Community, and other programs and projects associated with Berkeley's efforts, including CBOs.
- Create a Fund-A-Structure effort – cost out and then fundraise privately for structures and other capital costs for the STAIR and BRIDGE facilities, reaching out to Individuals, families, teams, businesses, organizations, neighborhood groups, and others to fund temporary lodging structures and spaces for offices, services, meals, and more.
- Engage contractors, builders, unions, and others to volunteer labor to set up temporary sites and structures.

- Fundraise in the local community to address both City and CBO needs, approaching wealthy individuals, organizations and businesses in Bay Area and beyond. Engage merchant, business and other local associations, Lions Clubs, and others.
- Initiate an “all hands on deck” effort to bring the community together and maximize opportunities for Berkeley residents and organizations/businesses to participate; coordinate in-kind and volunteer elements to support the STAIR Center, Bridge Living Community and CBOs.
- Create a new not-for-profit, or identify an existing agency to create and staff a project to coordinate fundraising, outreach, grant writing, volunteer management and other elements of this effort, to receive donations of furniture, clothing, and other items and to recruit and supervise mentors, teachers, helpers, and other volunteers.

The Pathways Project: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Mental Health Challenge: Alameda County’s mental health services, like those throughout the State, represent a challenge that must be undertaken by a humane society. Daily, we witness individuals on our streets unable to care for themselves and who are in crisis. Therefore, the Pathways Project will work with the County of Alameda to

- provide adequate services and facilities to assist those in crisis
- research best practices that have proven to result in effective outcomes
- direct our mental health policies and resources toward achieving such outcomes

The Pathways Project will also incorporate systems to

- Track and report costs, benefits and other outcomes
- Publicize efforts and opportunities

The Pathways Project: CONCLUSION

The Pathways Project acknowledges that Homelessness is a difficult and expensive problem to address, which transcends geographical and city borders, and requires state and national action as well as action at the local level. Under the current President and national administration, it is unlikely that the needs of the homeless will be meaningfully addressed. However, opportunities for progress at the State level should be pursued, including universal healthcare.

We further acknowledge that even with Berkeley’s best efforts, through adoption and implementation of the Pathways Project, we are unlikely to fully resolve homelessness in our community. Despite these challenges, we believe it is a moral imperative for our community to do everything in our power to work towards resolving this crisis, for the benefit of the homeless themselves, and for the benefit of the entire community.

We call upon the demonstrated goodwill and generosity of the people of Berkeley, and of our friends throughout the region – and beyond – as well as our dedicated social services agencies and City Staff, to join together to address this great humanitarian crisis.

Sketches of possible STAIR CENTER – Courtesy of Chris Walker





See Following Page for Sketches of Possible BRIDGE LIVING COMMUNITY

Sketches of possible BRIDGE LIVING COMMUNITY – Courtesy of Chris Walker

